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THOUGHTS

ON

CONVOCATIONAL REFORM.

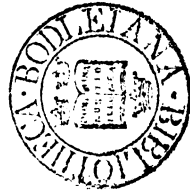
PART I.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

BY

WILLIAM FRASER, B.C.L.

VICAR OF ALTON, STAFFORDSHIRE, AND DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE
EARL OF SHREWSBURY AND TALBOT.



LONDON:

BELL AND DALDY, 186 FLEET STREET.

1860.

LEEDS. 5. 2. 87

Conv. Reform

By the same Writer.

**The Constitutional Nature of the Convocations of the
Church of England.** By WILLIAM FRASER, B.C.L. Price 1s.

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**A Letter to a Convocation-Man, concerning the Rights,
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B.C.L. Price 2s.

"Mr. Fraser has edited, with an introduction and very useful notes, the celebrated Letter which was the beginning of the great Convocation controversy. The Letter deserves careful study; and every student will thank Mr. Fraser for the assistance given in this edition."—*Journal of Convocation*.

LONDON: J. MASTERS.

THOUGHTS

ON

CONVOCATIONAL REFORM.

THE question of Reform in Parliament is just now occupying some share of public attention. Is not the very mention of it to an earnest and thoughtful English Churchman suggestive of Reform in Convocation? For Convocation is equally with Parliament a part of "our Constitution in Church and State." Hooker speaks of "the Parliament of England, together with the Convocation annexed thereto," as being "that whereupon the very essence of all government within this kingdom doth depend," as being "even the body of the whole realm."* Convocation is, constitutionally speaking, "the estate of the Clergy." But, unlike Parliament, Convocation has been for a long time past deposed from its constitutional place in the government of our Church; and therefore it needs—far more than Parliament now does—a wise and carefully considered measure of Reform to bring it into due working order, and to render it really productive of all the spiritual benefits which it is capable of conferring on the Church and on the nation. As Englishmen, taking pride in our country's freedom and stability, and used to ascribe them—and with truth—to the fact that our government is based upon representative institutions, we are every one of us interested in the mode of our representation in Parliament; and, just in the same degree, as English Churchmen loving our mother Church, and eagerly desiring her welfare and progress, we are interested—it is our duty to be interested—

* *Ecc. Polity*, book viii. ch. vi. § 2.

in that assembly, which some have called her Parliament, that is, the Convocation in which her Bishops and Clergy meet for deliberation and mutual counsel in Holy Synod.

This part of our Church's government has been too long neglected, though it is based upon inspired precedent, and though the wisdom of our ancestors clung to it and cherished it. During the ecclesiastical dark ages of the Georgian era our Synods were forgotten and almost laid aside; but now a new life has sprung up within the Church, a new spirit is pervading her Clergy and her members; and as a necessary consequence, her Convocations have revived. New wants are felt, new energies are being called into action, unwonted efforts are being made in all directions; and to guide and direct these rightly, Churchmen are feeling that they must have recourse to the old way of Synodical deliberation and decision—the way which Holy Scripture prescribes, which the Apostles practised, and which the Church of England, who evidences her oneness with the Apostolic Church by doing so, has provided for her members in her Convocations. No one can deny that the revival of our Convocations within the last few years is a marvellous thing. The devout Churchman sees in it the finger of God, and an augury of the future destiny of his Church; while Romanists and Dissenters cannot but own that it is a most noteworthy event.

But the present state of Convocation is not altogether satisfactory. The Reports of its Committees, indeed, are full of wisdom. Many and great advantages have already resulted to the Church from its sessions. But it is too fettered in its action, its sessions are too limited as to time, for it to be what a Christian, who longs to see the Church carrying out her high mission and effectually doing her Lord's work, would desire that it really should be. Our Convocation needs both more external freedom and more completeness of internal arrangement. It wants Reform.

Convocational Reform, then, is really one of the vital questions of the present day. It may be true that the Church's lukewarm friends regard it with an apathy which it is difficult to enter into; but, on the other hand, her enemies understand too well its importance; and they therefore are, and have been,

hurrying on their measures for the injury of religion, for poisoning the purity of social life, for depraving the Church's Liturgy, or despoiling her revenues, with all their power, that they may accomplish their destructive projects before the Church has those means of deliberating how to baffle them, and how to defend herself, which a reformed Convocation would give her.

Will it then not be worth the while of English Churchmen to give a little of their attention to this question of Convocational Reform? What do we mean by it? some ask. Let us state our thoughts on the point in reply to the inquiry. The Reforms which are required in the constitution and working of Convocation naturally branch into two divisions:—First, Reform in its elections, and in the mode in which it represents the Clergy; and next, Reform in its internal machinery, and in the relations of the two Houses to one another. At present we confine ourselves altogether to the first of these.

Convocation—by which we mean now the Convocation of Canterbury—in this resembles Parliament, that it consists of two Houses, the Upper and the Lower. In the Upper House, the Archbishop and the Bishops sit and deliberate; in the Lower House sit the Deans, the Archdeacons, the Proctors of Chapters, and the Proctors of the Diocesan Clergy. It is only the Lower House that the Reforms that we are now going to propose would touch; and, in the Lower House, they would deal chiefly with the Proctors who represent the Clergy of each Diocese.

The Reforms, then, which would make the Lower House of Convocation more truly and fully represent the Church of England, and which would, by doing so, gain for the whole body a far greater share of the confidence of the English people than they now can claim, are apparently these:—I. Such an extension of the ecclesiastical suffrage as would admit all licensed Curates who are in Priests' Orders, to the right of voting in the election of Diocesan Proctors. II. Such a moderate increase in the number of Diocesan Proctors as would be commensurate with the additional numbers of the new ecclesiastical constituency. III. A permissive use of voting papers at elections. IV. Such a means of unfettered communication with the Church laity as would ensure that their opinions might be freely stated, and their wishes made fully known to Convocation itself.

I. We will take these *seriatim*. And, first, the extension of the ecclesiastical suffrage; for extension of the suffrage is the idea which first suggests itself to an Englishman's mind in connexion with the word Reform. The privilege of voting for Proctors,* or, in other words, of being represented in Convocation, should be given to *all* priests licensed to the cure of souls and engaged in parochial work. This would be a popular step to take, and would be considered in that light by the laity. In fact, those who look back a little, will recollect that it used to be a standing argument with the opponents of the revival of Convocation, that it did not fairly represent the Clergy, because the body of Curates were generally excluded. There is no doubt force in the argument; and there is also no doubt that it is only just and right that all priests who are engaged in the Church's work, and who are committed by express "assent and consent" to the Church's Liturgy and Ritual, should be represented in the Church's Synods. Why should the possession or non-possession of certain temporalities make a distinction which, in the present day at least, is baseless and uncalled for? When the Apostles and Presbyters of the Church of Jerusalem "came together" in Synod,† we can hardly suppose that there arose any question as to which of the latter body were beneficed and which unbeneficed. In the early Church of Britain, in days antecedent to papal tyranny, we know that "*all* the Clergy" were accustomed to meet their Bishops in Synod.‡ Why should it not be so now? The reasons on the one side are many and good,§ on the other there is but the intolerance of a spurious Conservatism—unworthy of the name—which grudges the opportunities to others which yet it does not employ itself, which in the Diocese of Hereford has deprived, or attempted to deprive, Curates of a right they had immemorially exercised,|| and in the Diocese of Exeter has not availed itself of the opening which the peculiar practice of that Diocese in citing Curates, and the existence of precedents for their voting, had furnished for admitting them to be full members of the constituency of the Church.¶ Surely this oligarchic spirit, which is disap-

* See Appendix A.

† Acts, xv. 6.

‡ Joyce's *England's Sacred Synods*, p. 121.

§ See Appendix B.

|| See Appendix C.

¶ See Appendix D.

pearing so fast before the enlightened Conservatism of the political world, ought not to be retained and fostered in the Church. The Upper House, be it remembered, has shown no unwillingness to concede the suffrage to stipendiary Curates; it is rather among the Presbyterate that the opposition, if there were any, to such a concession would arise. And there is some doubt as to whether the power to grant it does not lie in their hands; for while the mere command of the Archbishop, it is thought, cannot lawfully effect any alteration in the manner of electing Proctors without a Canon being regularly passed and ratified by the Royal Assent, it yet appears highly probable that the electing Synods themselves could make what changes they thought good in their own mode of acting,—that they could pass resolutions for the guidance of the Bishop or Archdeacon who presided over them, and was their returning officer, before proceeding to their election, and then with his concurrence could act upon them afterwards in the election itself; and, in the event of the validity of their election thus made being disputed, they could require to be heard in their own defence by counsel in the Upper House.

But be this as it may, the admission of Curates to be represented in Convocation,—a measure which would add nearly four thousand clergy to the Church constituency,—is certainly a Reform at once really expedient and really equitable.

II. The natural result of increasing the constituency would be, that the number of Diocesan Proctors would also require to be increased in some sort of proportion with it. It has been a long-standing complaint that the number of the representatives of the Parochial Clergy was so very small. Kennet said, in 1701, "My wishes and earnest desires would be that the Parochial Clergy were more equally and fully represented in our Convocations; that their Proctors in the Lower House might be at least a balance to the other dignified Presbyters, and not be exceeded by them more than one half; one hundred, suppose, to less than forty." The numbers of the Lower House now are twenty-four Deans, fifty-eight Archdeacons, twenty-three capitular Proctors, and forty-two Proctors for the Clergy, so that the representatives of the Parochial Clergy are still but a moiety of the permanent members. In order to remedy this inequality, which is an obvious defect in the Convocation of Canterbury, a com-

mittee of Convocation itself, some years ago, recommended that there should be a Proctor for the Clergy of each Archdeaconry to be elected by the Clergy of that Archdeaconry. This would increase the number of the Diocesan Proctors by fifteen, the very smallest increase that is feasible. It has also been proposed, in order to avoid the non-representation of a large minority, that each Archdeaconry should return two Proctors; but this increase would be probably too great. The difficulty lies in this, that new electoral districts would have to be marked out, which would supersede the old well-known Dioceses or Archdeaconries. Would not this difficulty be obviated by Convocation, when engaged in the work of self-reform, assigning two Proctors to each of the additional sees recommended by the Cathedral Commissioners of 1852? These would be the Dioceses of St. Columb (for Cornwall), Westminster, Southwell, Brecon, Coventry, Chelmsford or Colchester, Derby, Ipswich, Bath, as separated from Wells, and Bristol and Gloucester, reverting to their ancient independency. Thus twenty additional Proctors would be joined to the parochial clergy, and at the same time the new districts would be placed in train to be made into Dioceses as soon as opportunity should offer; the wise and well-considered suggestion of the Cathedral Commissioners would be treated to some extent as an accomplished fact; and a real and tangible work would have been done, which might serve to stimulate the liberality of Churchmen to procure endowments for the new Dioceses. But whether this or some other scheme be adopted, we may at least lay it down as indisputable, that the number of the Diocesan Proctors ought to receive some considerable increase.

III. Another measure of Reform which would most materially conduce to a fuller and better representation of the Clergy, and which would, in point of fact, afford every single parish Clergyman an easy and ready way of recording his opinions on matters which concern the Church, and of having his wants, his plans, and his views, in other words, his *reformanda et gravamina*, fairly represented in Convocation, would be so far to make a change in the manner of conducting the elections of each Diocese, as to allow the Clergy the option of voting by voting-papers. In certain dioceses, it is quite impossible that all the clergy should attend the electing Synod on the day of election; and usually

but a small number from the more distant parishes are or can be present; so that practically the appointment of the Proctors lies in the hands of these who live in the immediate neighbourhood of the cathedral city, or of the town at which the election takes place. In the diocese of Exeter, for example, the electing Synod is held in the cathedral, and it is out of the question that any large number of the clergy from the more distant parts of Cornwall should be able to attend. Therefore the Clergy, whose incumbencies are situated at the extremity of the diocese, must in a large proportion be prevented, either by the trouble of a tedious journey, or the *res angusta* of a poorly-endowed benefice, from recording their votes for Proctors; and thereby be debarred from their inherent right of being represented in the Synod of their National Church. This would be still more largely the case, if stipendiary Curates were admitted to the franchise. Now, if each clergyman were enabled to affix his signature to a voting-paper, declaring which candidate he voted for, and to authenticate it by the counter-signatures, either of a justice of the peace, or of two other clergymen entitled to votes, or of another clergyman and a churchwarden, and allowed either to send the voting-paper in a registered letter to the returning officer, or to give it in at the time of election by the hand of any clergyman present at the Synod; then the whole clergy of any diocese might be considered to be fully and fairly represented, and it would be the personal fault of each individual clergyman if his vote was not duly given. If this were done, how much more weight would each Proctor have in the eyes of his fellow-Proctors, and how greatly, as a necessary consequence, would the authority and moral influence of Convocation be increased both in the Church and in the nation at large!

The option of voting by voting-papers, therefore, should be a necessary part of any scheme of Convocational Reform.

VI. The last Convocational Reform that is imperatively required, is an easy way of consulting with the Church laity, of gaining access to their views and opinions on ecclesiastical subjects, and of obtaining their advice and support in all proceedings really bearing on the interests of the Church either in her spiritual or temporal aspects. To admit laymen to sit in Convocation itself, is at once to destroy its character as a

Synod, and would so thoroughly change its constitutional position, that it could be no longer recognized. It would be to abolish our ancient Convocations, and to fill their place by an anomalous assembly unknown and untried in England before. But this need not be done. A scheme for ensuring the correspondence of Church-of-England laymen with their brethren of the Clergy, in all points in which their mutual co-operation is required, has been elaborated by Mr. Hoare with so much of practical genius, and with so much of that earnest perseverance, which is a higher quality even than genius, that his *Hints on Lay Co-operation* supersede altogether the necessity of discussing or entering into the question here. If the Clergy will but enter into the plan he proposes; if the Bishops, Archdeacons, and Rural Deans will, in good faith and in earnest, endeavour to render their visitations and meetings what they were intended to be—what Mr. Hoare proposes that they should be, and demonstrates that they are capable of being—then our Clergy and our Laity will be soon brought to think and work cordially together; and their hearty co-operation with the Bishops, and the representatives of the Clergy in Convocation, cannot fail, with Divine aid, to render our Church what every true-hearted Churchman would fain have her be, “a praise upon earth.”

These measures of Reform would each and all be based upon that first principle of all true Reform—a return to the real nature and essence of the thing to be reformed. They would be pure developments of the terms of the Royal Writ. They would enable “the whole Clergy” of the realm to consult together, in the best and freest manner, on those “weighty and arduous affairs” which every year that passes by brings before the eye of the Church and the kingdom.

And now, at last, a word to those who cannot see that Reform is required for Convocation, because they cannot see that Convocation is required for the Church. Can it be really so? Does not the conscience of the true Churchman bear a concurrent testimony with the experience of the true Statesman, that they are altogether in the wrong? * Spiritual insight and

* “I, whose leading principle it is, in a reformation of the state to make use of existing materials, am of opinion that the representation of the Clergy as a separate order was an institution which touched all the orders more

real political wisdom must be at one in feeling that some freedom of synodical deliberation is now a most real want for the Church of England. Without it we do not know where we are drifting to. Violent and unprovoked attacks are being unremittingly made upon the Church's very existence,* and she cannot even give the collective voice of her members in reply. The hideous Divorce Bill has been forced upon her reluctant Clergy, and they could only stand by powerless, while its abominations were made the law of the land. Every effort is being made to legalize incest, and they cannot ensure that it shall not soon be commonly allowed. They cannot speak, or if they do, it is but by twos and threes, and their remonstrance is only treated with contempt:

"Pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli."

The mutilation of the Liturgy through the instrumentality of the State is threatened; and who can tell that her opinion will be allowed to be taken even on this vital matter? If her Convo-

nearly than any of them touched the other; that it was well fitted to connect them; and to hold a place in any wise monarchical commonwealth."—*A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly*, by Edmund Burke. 1791.

* "Radical politicians, we know, greatly dislike spending any particle of their strength upon ecclesiastical questions. They will have to conquer that dislike; for ecclesiastical questions will furnish the chief occasions of popular conflict for years to come. But for the strange and anomalous position occupied just now by the State-Church—but for the evident fact that that institution is out of keeping with all our other institutions—but for its hatred of all change, its tenacious clinging to all abuses, its monopoly of honours, its disregard of common justice, its never-ending attempts at encroachment, its oppressive exactions, its grasping cupidity, we question whether now-a-days the middle classes would be got to take even a passing interest in politics. Upon no other subject can excitement be so easily awakened. Why, even in the House of Commons there is far more earnestness in reference to some of its phases, than almost any other matter can produce: every one feels that it is the grand question, on either side of which political parties will soon range themselves. It will be impossible to form and discipline a party without distinct reference to this. Even Parliamentary Reform is chiefly desired on the one hand, and deprecated on the other, as it is believed to bear upon the future destiny of the Church. The Church, in fact, although so seldom mentioned as such, constitutes the centre about which political feeling mainly revolves.

"Of course we do not expect that our convictions on this matter can be safely thrust into a programme of policy; but, as we said before, a fundamental truth or two, stopping short of our ultimate, and yet broad enough to answer present, need, will be found an indispensable feature of any manifesto which is designed to serve as a banner to the Radical party, and as a source of inspiration and a bond of union to its members. They will never gain either unity, discipline, or courage, until they can dare to face the greatest anomaly of the age—the Established Church. It is the only remaining enterprise capable of inspiring enthusiasm."—*The Nonconformist*.

cation is silenced, she can only speak by indirect hints, and her voice can give no certain sound. It is possible, indeed, that the much-talked-of abolition of Church-rates may do something to awaken men's minds to our Church's need of mutual help and counsel, and of Synodal action. In fact, it is awakening them. But then, is it not somewhat ignominious that a question of revenue should be looked to for accomplishing what nearer and dearer questions of truth and of morality had failed to do ?*

What is the Church of England to trust to, if she is not to be trusted to herself? To the House of Commons? Alas! with its rapidly increasing number of Jewish representatives it has ceased even to bear the name of Christian. To the Minister of the day? We trow not. To her Bishops? But they are of the Minister's selection! It is true that many of the Bishops are wise and cautious; but how would their position be strengthened, and the success of their efforts rendered certain, if they were seen and known in all things to be seconded by the experience and energy of the Synods of their Clergy? It ought to be so. The very being of our Church demands that it should be so. With the union of wills and powers that a Synod would soon effect, she might subdue the world. Why should she wilfully neglect so great a source of influence? In what is she better than the ancient Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch? Is she more infallible than they?—that she should cast aside the means of life and power which human experience recommends, and Holy Scripture gives us authority for—the means of solemn deliberation, mutual counsel, and united action under the promised guidance of the Spirit of grace, which a lawful Synod of the Church would secure to her and to her members?

* Does not the question of Church-rates lie in a very small compass? The law on Poor-rates is, that whoever has not paid his Poor-rates is deprived of his vote in vestry, until he has paid them. If the law were made the same on Church-rates, would not the whole matter be simplified at once? The parishioner who, for whatever reason—it might be poverty, it might be conscientious scruples—had not paid his Church-rates, would lose his right of being present in vestry, and of interfering in church business there. He would not be ticketed as a Dissenter; he would be merely a non-payer, and might regain his parish rights at any time by paying up his arrears. No sharp line of demarcation would be drawn between the Church and Dissent, and yet the church people in vestry would be relieved from the vexatious interference of men who pay nothing to the support of the church, and yet endeavour to control or to weary out those who do.

APPENDIX.

A.

Report of Committee on the Claim of Curates to vote.

At a Meeting of the Committee of the Upper House of Convocation, held at London House, July 26, 1853, present the Bishops of London, Salisbury, Oxford, and Llandaff, the following Report was agreed to :—

After examination of the only authorities known to them, the Committee are of opinion that there is no evidence to show that the votes of stipendiary Curates have ever been received at the election of Proctors to the Convocation in the Province of Canterbury.

That by the 27th of Elizabeth, cap. 28, stipendiary Curates were taxed toward payment of the subsidies imposed on the Clergy by Convocation; but that in the opinion of the Committee no conclusion can be drawn from that fact as to the right of stipendiary Curates as they are now known to the law to vote at the election of Convocation Proctors; that from the case of Dr. Dey and Mr. Knewstubbs, as recorded in Gibson's "*Synodus Anglicana*,"* it appears more probable that the votes of Curates in the election of Knewstubbs were disallowed. Your Committee, therefore, in the absence of any direct proof, are of opinion that the preponderance of evidence is against the right of stipendiary Curates to vote at the election of Proctors to Convocation.

B.

Proceedings of Convocation, April 15, 1856. Extracted from the Journal of Convocation, vol. ii. pp. 205-208.

RIGHTS OF STIPENDIARY CURATES.

The *Bishop of Oxford* presented a petition from the Rev. W. Fraser, stipendiary Curate of Alton, in the diocese of Lichfield, in favour of the right of stipendiary Curates to vote for the election of Proctors in Convocation. The petition contained some considerations upon the subject which were new to himself, and when

* Appendix, pp. 140-144.

such a petition, showing a large amount of information, came to their lordships from any respectable source, he was surè they would deem it worthy of consideration. He begged to move that the petition should lie on the table, and that his Grace be requested to refer it to his Vicar-General, with instructions to make a report upon its movements at a future time.

The motion was agreed to. The following is the petition :—

“ To the Most Rev. the Archbishop, the Right Rev. the Bishops, and the Rev. the Clergy of the Province of Canterbury, in Convocation assembled.

“ The petition of William Fraser, Clerk, Bachelor in the Civil Law, Stipendiary Curate of Alveton or Alton in the diocese of Lichfield,

“ Very humbly sheweth—

“ That your petitioner is a clerk in the holy orders of a priest, and that he is licensed by the Lord Bishop of Lichfield to the stipendiary curacy of the parish of Alveton or Alton, in his Lordship's diocese; and that, the Vicar of the said parish being non-resident, your petitioner has the sole care in spirituals of the said parish.

“ That the Holy Synod or Convocation of the Province of Canterbury is at this time treating of, and is likely further to treat of, matters touching the discipline of the Church of England, and of the clergy thereof; and that such matters of discipline concern your petitioner in common with all other clerks having cure of souls.

“ That in accordance with the principle that ‘ what concerneth all should be treated of and consented to by all,’ your petitioner should have liberty to appear with the other clergy of the diocese of Lichfield, by his proctor in the Convocation; but that, notwithstanding, he verily believeth that if he were to tender his vote at the election of such Proctor, his vote would not be received and allowed, as being that of an unbeneficed clerk.

“ That your petitioner is aware that the license of the Crown for making a canon or constitution, by which, among other changes, the power of voting at elections of proctors might be given to unbeneficed clerks being licensed, has not been granted; but your petitioner humbly conceiveth that such a canon or constitution is not of necessity required, and that the liberty for which he petitions may be granted without it, and that for the following reasons :—

“ Because a class of the beneficed clergy, now known as Perpetual Curates, came into existence at the Reformation, and did not at first possess the right of voting for Proctors, which right they have since gradually acquired without any canon or constitution of Convocation granting it to them, that your petitioner knoweth of:

“ Because such perpetual curates are now allowed to have a right to vote at the election of Proctors, while yet, for a long period of years, their right to such votes was doubtful, and was never formally decided by any judicial sentence of the Upper House of Convocation:

“ Because, in the case of Dey against Knewstubbs, which came under the cognisance of the Convocation, A.D. 1586, ‘ the curates,’ whom your petitioner understandeth to be the perpetual curates, were ‘ taken to have no voice there;’ and so late as A.D. 1734, in a contested election in the diocese of Ely between Mr. Hetherington and Mr. Colbatch, each having thirty-six votes, Mr. Colbatch protested on the ground that a perpetual curate had voted for Mr. Hetherington; while yet in these dioceses at the present time perpetual curates are always admitted to vote:

“ Because, as your petitioner is informed, in some dioceses rectors and vicars only are cited to appear in the electing Synod, while perpetual curates notwithstanding also appear, and give their votes:

“ Because the curates referred to in the before-mentioned case of Dey against Knewstubbs have hitherto been supposed to be stipendiary curates;

which supposition appears to your petitioner to be incorrect on these grounds :—First, that the usual legal and ecclesiastical designation of the beneficed clergy at that time was ‘parsons, vicars, and curates,’ which words are used in the acts of the Lower House of 1586. Second, that the word ‘curates’ was not at that time the exact and proper designation of such clerks as do the parish work of other clerks for a hire or stipend, and therefore was not likely to be so used in a formal document. Third, that the then usual designation for such unbeneficed clerks was ‘stipendiaries,’ a term not found in the acts. Fourth, that it is far from probable that at that time there existed fourteen stipendiary curates in the archdeaconry of Sudbury.

“Your petitioner desires, further, humbly to submit that there are many other licensed clerks in the Church of England, comprising a very large body of ‘the whole clergy’ of that Church, who are wholly engaged in parochial work, and in no way fall short of the beneficed clergy, either as regards example of life or soundness of doctrine, who are not admitted to vote for Proctors.

“That there can be nothing in the constitution of Convocation itself repugnant to the admission of stipendiary curates to vote for Proctors, for that they do so vote in the diocese of Hereford, and in certain archdeaconries of York province.

“That they are strictly as much under the authority of the archdeacons as are the beneficed clergy whom the Bishop requires the archdeacons to cite; and that they are so cited in the diocese of Exeter.

“And that it hath seemed to be the manifest intention of that portion of the Catholic Church which is commonly called the Church of England, that all priests having mission from the Bishops of that Church should appear, either personally or by their Proctors, in all provincial Church Synods.

“Your petitioner, therefore, humbly prays your venerable houses so to take these premises into their favourable consideration, as that at the next election for Proctors for the diocese in which he may be licensed as a stipendiary curate, he may be cited by the archdeacon, and his vote may be allowed and accepted by the said archdeacon, so that he may appear by his Proctor in the Convocation of the province of Canterbury.

“Trusting you may be guided in your deliberations by the great Head of the Church, your petitioner will ever pray.

“(Signed) WILLIAM FRASER, B.C.L., Curate of Alton.”

C.

Letter from the Proctor for the Diocese of Hereford.

Burford Rectory, Tenbury,

Feb. 17, 1857.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

In the diocese of Hereford all *Curates licensed to the cure of souls by the Bishop*, whether perpetual or stipendiary, take part in the election of Convocation Proctors, and record their votes. This has been the case from time immemorial. At my own election the Rev. John Miller (formerly Bampton Lecturer at Oxford) proposed me as a candidate. He at that time, being stipendiary Curate of the parish of Bockleton. Many of those who voted for me were Curates; and some of those who voted against me.

In truth, the fact of their right in that respect is undeniable in this diocese. Who the Archdeacon may be who has so remarkably misstated the practice of this diocese, I have no means of knowing. Any information I can give on a subject, which con-

siderably interests me, I will most willingly forward you at any time * * *

I am, Rev. and dear Sir,

Very faithfully your brother,

J. WAYLAND JOYCE.

D.

Extract from a Petition presented, or intended to be presented, to the Convocation of 1818, by the Rev. J. Dennis, B.C.L., the unsuccessful Candidate for the representation of the Clergy of Exeter.

It is intended at the ensuing meeting of Convocation to present a petition for the appointment of a committee to try the merits of the election of two Proctors for the diocese of Exeter, on the following grounds:—

* * * * *

5. That another candidate was also returned as duly elected, who had not a majority of lawful votes.

6. That the candidate who was rejected had the majority of unquestioned votes.

* * * * *

9. That the votes of stipendiary Curates were received as valid, though the law authority declaring them illegal was openly read in the court, that class of the Clergy, from not having contributed to subsidies, having never acquired the right of suffrage at the election of Proctors.

* * * * *

15. That immediately on the close of the poll, the rejected candidate notified his intention of petitioning Convocation to vacate the election.—*Convocatio Cleri*, by Rev. J. Dennis, B.C.L. Parker, Oxford, pp. 17, 18.

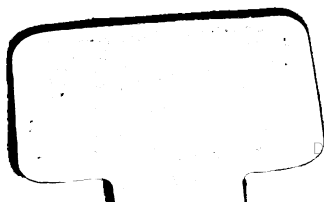
Copy of Protest of Stipendiary Curates in the Diocese of Exeter in 1856.

Protest given on the day of election.

Whereas, in the diocese of Exeter, it has been customary that stipendiary Curates, being in priests' orders, should be cited to vote at elections of Proctors for Convocation. And whereas, stipendiary Curates heretofore have voted at such elections. We the undersigned do hereby claim the right of recording our vote on the present occasion, and protest against our votes being refused.

Signed by four or five stipendiary Curates.

London:—Printed by G. BARCLAY, Castle St. Leicester Sq.



L.F.W.Eng.-Ref.37 e.Convocation 1. Fraser,W.
Reform. 1860.

Thoughts on Convocational